

# Why Reconnect?

Reconnect – September 27, 2009 (2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday)

**Text:** Mark 5:21-43; John 15:9-13

**Key Thought:** Reconnecting brings meaning to life through sharing it, in all its ups and downs, with others and with God.

When Jesus went back across to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. A leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, came and fell down before him, pleading with him to heal his little daughter. "She is about to die," he said in desperation. "Please come and place your hands on her; heal her so she can live." Jesus went with him, and the crowd thronged behind. And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a haemorrhage for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors through the years and had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she was worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched the fringe of his robe. For she thought to herself, "if I can just touch his clothing, I will be healed. Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel that she had been healed! Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "All this crowd is pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and told him what she had done. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You have been healed." While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from Jairus's home with the message, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now." But Jesus ignored their comments and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me." Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter and James and John. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw the commotion and the weeping and wailing. He went inside and spoke to the people. "Why all this weeping and commotion?" he asked. "The child isn't dead, she is only asleep." The crowd laughed at him, but he told them all to go outside. Then he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying. Holding her hand, he said to her, "Get up, little girl!" And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! Her parents were absolutely overwhelmed. Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened, and he told them to give her something to eat. Mark 5:21-43, NLT

## Pre-Intro: The Cleaner S02E07P02 ("I need help")

### Intro: The ups and downs of life

- The doctor in the video has gone in a matter of days from being at the top of the world in his profession and his life, to being at the bottom – a junkie, trying to quit cold turkey
- It's a dramatic reversal – probably accented just a bit, for the sake of making good TV – but live a little, and you know reversals happen to people all the time, and there's never a good time for it
- Confucius said,

"The wheel of fortune turns round incessantly, and who can say to himself, I shall today be uppermost?"

- Like the financial scandals of late – Bernie Madoff, Earl Jones, others, all coming to light with what's been happening in the world's financial markets – people thinking that everything is great one day and then finding out the next that the money's gone, and they are going to lose their house and they don't even have maybe have enough money to buy groceries – reversal – you get angry, you get sad, you grieve, you deny, you bargain – like the stages of death – we suffer, and only then do we ask "why?"
- We're like that – C.S. Lewis famously said that

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

- And maybe you're up right now, and maybe you're down, and maybe you're somewhere in between
- But we're going to look at two people this morning that Reconnected with God through an encounter with Jesus – two people that at one point, had thought they had it all together – and then found themselves desperate for help

## **Read Text: Mark 5:21-43**

**When Jesus went back across to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. A leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, came and fell down before him, pleading with him to heal his little daughter. "She is about to die," he said in desperation. "Please come and place your hands on her; heal her so she can live." Jesus went with him, and the crowd thronged behind.**

v.21 - banned from one side of the lake, lands on the western side (show map) and gets mobbed - a crush of people, and it just keeps growing – Jesus' hometown region

v.22 - Jairus - synagogue ruler in Capernaum - the place where Jesus has used as a hub - he's been there a lot, doing miracles - how many times has Jairus watched, as he went about the synagogue business and kept trying to keep everyone grounded in what he knew, instead of everyone going off after THIS guy?- responsible for the building upkeep, organizing services - the "president" of the synagogue, but a layperson - had another job, but very esteemed in town life - Jairus "he who enlightens" has been trying to live up to his name, but it's going to get ironic very quickly

v.23 -he's pleading - generally synagogue rulers and the religious establishment have been hostile to Jesus and his message, turning the crowds upside down, dangerous ideas, stunts - was he hostile? Is he now so desperate that he comes to this young guy who is like a celebrity on tour? He loves his kid - when you love your kid, you'll do anything, including even "make a fool out of yourself" - he doesn't care about his status, or what people are going to say or not say, or even about tomorrow - it's just today, it's just now, it's just that his daughter is sick and dying - "put your hands on her" - it's the generally accepted way of healing - he's asking him to do what he knows, he's trying to use the lingo he knows and the ways that he's seen and been a part of - "just heal her - the right way - we'll be OK"

v.24 - he wasn't sure that Jesus would go, but Jesus had been sure since he opened his mouth - Jesus and the crowd, the mob - pushing, talking, debating, questioning - with Jesus and his followers in the centre, like celebrities in the middle of the paparazzi

**And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a haemorrhage for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors through the years and had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she was worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched the fringe of his robe. For she thought to herself, "if I can just touch his clothing, I will be healed. Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel that she had been healed! Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "All this crowd is pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and told him what she had done. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You have been healed."**

v.25 - woman bleeding - uterine bleeding - 12 years (keep that number in mind) - she's "unclean" - everything that Jairus is, she isn't - he's upstanding and helps people get "closer to God" - she's unclean, and anyone she touches, or who touches her, or even touches something she touched - they're unclean, unfit for God too - he spreads "life", she spreads "death" - his daughter is dying, but she dies a little more every day - plus he's a man - favoured - she's a woman - she may even be a Gentile - a nonJewish person, which would put her at the very bottom of the social chain in that region - you've got Jairus at the top, and this woman at the bottom, but both are coming to Jesus, desperate, united in their pain -he is the intersection of their lives - normally one would have NOTHING to do with the other - she's not even ALLOWED in the synagogue - she might sit on one of the chairs...!

v.26 - "suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors" - many of us know what that can be like today - how many of them tried something they'd read about, or heard done, or that they thought might make a difference? How many quack cures did she have to suffer through? Answer is, all of them - right up until her money had run out - now she's worse than ever - how old was she when this all started? For 12 years (keep that number in mind) her life has been on hold - in fact, she's been as good as dead for 12 years -isolated, cut off, alone, in pain, hurting, avoided like the plague

v.27 - and then, somehow, she hears about Jesus - she overhears a conversation, hears the buzz, sees the crowd, and now, the attention is off her - she can go "under the radar" - and hope begins to rise - hope against hope that perhaps this man can make a difference - she "touches his cloak" - really, the edge of his cloak - the tassels - Jewish men wore them as a reminder of the law, their way of life - she grabs onto Jesus by religion, even though he's the least religious guy in the crowd that day - is it magic she's thinking of? That she can somehow treat Jesus like a genie in a bottle?

v. 28 - Doesn't matter - it's faith - she believes in spite of herself that just maybe, he can do something, and touching this guy, the way that LIFE radiates from him, maybe just touching his clothing is enough

v.29 - "immediately" she is healed - and she knows it - because she's been bleeding for 12 years, so she has dreamt of this moment - how many cures did she endure, waiting to feel like this, and the feeling never came? But here it is

v.30 - "power goes out from Him" - very interesting way of phrasing it - like it's something separate, somehow, from him - and in a way , it is - it's God's power, and he's healing people through his trust in God - and he stops this entourage - people talking, pressing, shouting, stumbling, racing, gossiping - he stops it dead in its tracks and starts looking around, like he's lost something important - and everyone starts gaping with him, not even knowing what he's looking for!

v.31 - disciples - circled around him - "of COURSE someone touched you - like 100 someones!" - deep and mystical, but he just "doesn't get it"

v.32 - but it's like they're not there - it's just him and one person he's looking for - and then he finds her - or she finds him, and steps forward, out of the crowd

v.33 - - she's afraid - is she afraid she has made him unclean? Because anyone else would have been unclean after being touched by her- has she gained her healing at his expense? But she tells him "the whole truth" - the whole story - 12 years, summed up in what - two, three minutes? As Jairus tries to pretend he's happy for her, when really, his whole world is crashing down and he LOATHES her right now - for taking Jesus away, for robbing his little girl of one last chance - he can't see the good of what's happened - he's too wrapped up in his own junk to know anything else

v.34 - "daughter, your faith has healed you - go in peace - go in SHALOM - wholeness, peace, contentment, joy, gladness, where everything is right with the world - she's gone from unclean to shalom in about five minutes, after 12 years (there's that number again) of hopelessness and shame - "daughter" - how ironic, because daughter is all that Jairus is thinking of

**While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from Jairus's home with the message, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now." But Jesus ignored their comments and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me." Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter and James and John. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw the commotion and the weeping and wailing. He went inside and spoke to the people. "Why all this weeping and commotion?" he asked. "The child isn't dead, she is only asleep." The crowd laughed at him, but he told them all to go outside. Then he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying. Holding her hand, he said to her, "Get up, little girl!" And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! Her parents were absolutely overwhelmed. Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened, and he told them to give her something to eat.**

v.35 - "she's dead - why bother the teacher anymore?" - just let him go - this is beyond him now, if it ever was something he could have done, well, it's done now

v.36 - "ignoring" - in the Greek, either "overhearing" or "deliberately ignoring" - probably both - and says this - shouts it? whispers it? to Jairus: "Don't be afraid - just believe" - just trust me, trust this, what is happening is still happening, we're not done here

v.37 - only Peter, James and John are allowed in - Jesus is maybe trying to shed the crowd, or trying to let the three of them see something important

v.38 - professional mourners, which is what you did in those days - it was expected, and it was what they did for a living - you have banquet servers at a wedding, and mourners at a funeral - plus the family, stunned, shocked -and such a public family, on display - a wide variety of emotions, no doubt

v.39 - "not dead... asleep" - Jesus the optimist? Trying to minimize what he's about to do? Or trying to gauge the level of faith in him? Because there isn't much - they start laughing at him - what are you going to do here, carpenter-faith-healer boy? - "they laughed at him to scorn" - not with him - AT him

v.40 - he throws them out, brings the three disciples and the parents in with him - grabs her hand - again, "unclean!" and says "little girl, get up!" - and she does, and she's fine, and Jesus, practical too, says "get her a sandwich" - to take care of her, AND to show everyone that she's really alive - just like Jesus serves breakfast to the disciples on the beach after he rises from the dead - ghosts don't eat

v.42 -she's - wait for it - wait for it- 12 years old - the whole time she's been alive, the first woman has been suffering - every joy Jairus has had in her life has been matched by her misery -but Jesus is bigger than all of it

- Two people that day are drawn together in their misery, at the lowest point of their lives – they come from different worlds, different backgrounds, they have different ways of dealing with life, they even have different religions – but they intersect at Jesus – the only one who can help them – and he does – and they would never be the same for it – because he took the time for each of them – he showed compassion for each of them – he shared his life with each of them

## **All people matter – or they SHOULD**

- We learn from a very young age – younger and younger – that some people matter more than others – or at least, they should
- There are the “cool” people – the people like us, or maybe better, the people that we want to be like, and the people that we want to like us
- And then there are the rest – the uncool – the people that don’t really matter – maybe we don’t bear them any ill will, but they’re irrelevant – wallpaper in the corridors of our lives
- We learn those lessons very early – on the playground – and we spend a lifetime trying to UNLEARN them – because the older I get, anyway, the more I realize how terrible that attitude is
- We grow up, and that attitude turns into hero-worship – celebrity worship – we live our lives patterned on other people, people with feet of clay, and they demonstrate it again and again, and yet we persist
- We listen to their advice, we watch their shows, we read their books, we adopt their newest causes, we change our hairstyles, have surgery, the whole nine yards
- While the rest of the world suffers in silence – or burns, depending on where in the world you’re thinking of

## **People make all the difference:**

- And it does suffer – because people DO matter – they have to – more than names or faces, they are people just like you and I, with hopes and dreams and fears and joy and pain
- One of the things that so many of us that have grown up in Canada have in common is this man – Fred Rogers, of Mr. Rogers’ Neighbourhood, that show that was on when we were kids
- I learned a couple things this week about Mr. Rogers – one, that he had a show in Canada that was sort of a prequel to Mr. Rogers’ Neighbourhood – and another, that Mr. Dressup got his start from being mentored by Mr. Rogers
- But another one was that his love for Jesus informed everything he did – not in a preachy way, but in a way that valued people, always, without hesitation, and wanted the best – God’s best – for them
- Listen to some of what he had to say on the subject:

“I think everybody longs to be loved and longs to know that he or she is lovable and, consequently, the greatest thing that we can do is to help somebody know that they are loved and capable of loving.”

"If only you could sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person."

- (from Wikipedia) During the 1997 Daytime Emmys, the Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Rogers. The following is an excerpt from *Esquire Magazine's* coverage of the gala, written by Tom Junod (Nov. 1998 edition)

Mister Rogers went onstage to accept the award – and there, in front of all the soap opera stars and talk show sinceratrons, in from of all the jutting man-tanned jaws and jutting saltwater bosoms, he made his small bow and said into the microphone, “All of us have special ones who have loved us into being. Would you just take, along with me, ten seconds to think of the people who have helped you become who you are. Ten seconds of silence.”

And then he lifted his wrist, looked at the audience, looked at his watch, and said, “I’ll watch the time.” There was, at first, a small whoop from the crowd, a giddy, strangled hiccup of laughter, as people realized that he wasn’t kidding, that Mister Rogers was not some convenient eunuch, but rather a man, an authority figure who actually expected them to do what he asked. And so they did. One second, two seconds, seven seconds – and now the jaws clenched, and the bosoms heaved, and the mascara ran, and the tears fell upon the beglittered gathering like rain leaking down a crystal chandelier. And Mister Rogers finally looked up from his watch and said softly “May God be with you,” to all his vanquished children.

- And I thought it would be fitting to do just that this morning – we’ve come to Reconnect through many different avenues – some through people, or flyers, or a newspaper
- But a person or people has been involved – either in inviting you, or in you staying, so whether you’ve been here since we began or if this is your first Sunday, could we do that? Could we take 10 seconds – I’ll watch the time – to think about the people who have brought you to this point in your life?

**(pause)**

- You see, that’s the kind of person we’re called to be – that’s the kind of person that Reconnects – that shares their life with others and makes a difference
- And that’s the take-home thought this morning:

## Key Thought:

**Reconnecting brings meaning to life through sharing it, in all its ups and downs, with others and with God.**

[Jesus said,] “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey me, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father and remain in his love. I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you. And here is how to measure it – the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends.” John 15:9-13, NLT

## Conclusion: Am I ordinary?

- **(play video clip – The Cleaner S02E07P03)**
- It’s a question we all need to ask ourselves, because our answer will dictate our actions
- Can we make it through life without anyone’s help? Are we that good? That driven? That self-sufficient, that we can be at the centre of it all, rather than God? Without help from a community of people around us?
- Are we ordinary? Prone to flaws and failures? Making mistakes every day, but alongside them, doing things that are good, and loving and kind?
- I wanted to read you some of the results of our “I dream of Reconnect” contest – the way that others who are part of Reconnect answered the question “Why Reconnect?”

I reconnect because I am accepted and valued...because it is a comfortable place to be...and a worthwhile place to serve.

A friend had told me that she and her husband had started a new church and that I was welcome to come. There was never any pressure. Well, many months went by and then came Easter weekend 2008. I was feeling somewhat down and lost, so I decided that day that I was going to pack up my son and we were going to go to church. I had not been to church in years and was very skeptical, but I kept an open mind. I think I was at a point in my life where I needed to reach out and I needed direction. It was the best decision I ever made.....Now, almost a year and a half later, not only am I building a relationship with god, I have met a bunch of people who have become very good friends and the family I have always longed for. I have never met such a giving group of people and I don't know what we would have done without them. God was truly at work the day I decided to go to church and I am so thankful that I chose to listen, make time and make him a part of my life.

I desire to grow as a Christian, to practice love and compassion, to have a change in Jesus Christ.

I reconnect because I enjoy the real relationships I have with everyone at church. People are open enough to get to know you and through this relationships are built that encourage each other through different situations. People are also open enough to ask for prayer for situations they are going through.

I couldn't envision us connecting anywhere else right now. We're not enthusiastic about church or church planting, but we are enthusiastic about Christ-centric relationships. That's what we feel we are building at reconnect.

- Your reasons might be similar, or very different – but we need God, and we need each other now more than ever - in an uncertain world (Iran with nukes! H1N1!) we need to Reconnect with Jesus more than ever – He offers us his help, his love and acceptance, his nearness and his comfort – but we have to take that step towards Him – we have to offer what we have to Him, whether in desperation or in determination, and invite him in to the space of our lives
- What step do you need to take this morning? Do you need to Reconnect – maybe for the first time? Or maybe it's to Reconnect again – to tap into His love for you, to grow closer to the people around you that you share this journey with, to rely on us for strength and support – whatever it is, reach out this morning – take the help that's offered – trust Jesus, take him at his word and his death and life for you – make the change
- We're going to close this morning with a song – no doubt you've heard it before, but hear it this morning for the first time – it's not about alcohol – it's about a new beginning, in your life and mine

### **Response: Closing Time by Semisonic (video)**

- (pray)